

<b>TITLE V</b>	<b>HEALTHY FOREST RESERVES</b>
<b>Protection of Working Forests and Forest Habitat</b>	<b>B</b>

- Subdivision of forested lands threatens ecosystems significantly more than fuel reduction or forest health improvement projects.
- Forest landowners should be compensated when forfeiting development rights, and current efforts by state agencies and land trust organizations to use state and federal funds to protect critical lands are to be applauded.
- Continued congressional funding for Land and Water Conservation and Forest Legacy programs is vital to maintaining critical forest lands in productive condition.

<b>TITLE VI</b>	<b>FOREST INVENTORY AND MONITORING</b>
<b>Inventory and Monitoring of Threats to Forest Health</b>	<b>B+</b>

- Ongoing inventory and monitoring efforts by state and federal agencies are providing excellent resources for forest managers to make informed management decisions;
- Continued congressional funding of inventory and monitoring functions within state and federal agencies is critical to meeting future forest health challenges.

THE FOREST ECONOMY	
Timber Supply - Commercial Timber Harvest	C+

- Forest health and fuel reduction projects must alter the forest canopy sufficiently to modify fire behavior to prevent damaging fire effects. This generally involves removal of commercially valuable trees, benefiting the forest economy and subsidizing forest restoration work as well.
- Projected increases in timber offerings from National Forests in Montana is welcome news to the forest industry and timber-dependent communities;

<b>Montana Wood Products and Logging Industries</b>	<b>B-</b>
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- Maintaining a forest industry infrastructure will be critical to our success in meeting the forest health challenge before us. If it is lost, we will be forced to use tax dollars to pay for fuel reduction projects rather than using the value of commercial logs to do so.
- Leaders in state and federal government, communities, and businesses should work together to promote forest policies that improve forest health *and* provide a sustainable supply of raw material.

For a copy of the full report go to <http://www.dnrc.state.mt.us/forestry>

# ***MONTANA HEALTHY FORESTS HEALTHY COMMUNITIES REPORT CARD***

*An assessment of the condition of Montana's  
forests and the communities that depend on them*

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Conservation  
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<b>TITLE I</b>	<b>HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION / FOREST HEALTH IMPROVEMENT</b>
<b>Collaboration on Forest Management Projects</b>	<b><i>B</i></b>

- It is premature to assess the full impact of the HFRA at streamlining planning and approval of fuel reduction/forest health improvement projects.
- Collaboration with the public and among traditional adversaries is improving, but much remains to be done to facilitate stakeholder involvement without stalling project proposals.

<b>Community Wildfire Planning</b>	<b><i>B+</i></b>
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- The development of Predisaster Mitigation Plans and Community Wildfire Protection Plans in Montana is proceeding well, yet more coordination and oversight is needed to ensure plans meet criteria established in the HFRA.
- Analysis is needed to determine the level of adoption and enforcement of “Fire Protection Guidelines for Wildland Residential Interface Development” in Montana.
- Insurance companies should continue to be engaged to develop market-based incentives for proper development design in the WUI and fuel reduction around existing structures in WUI.

<b>Forest Management, Fuel Treatment, and Forest Health Improvement</b>	<b><i>B-</i></b>
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- Approximately 209,000 forested acres were treated in Montana in 2004, meaning it would take about 86 years to treat the 18 million acres of Montana forests at risk from damaging wildfire, insects, or disease.
- Federal agencies have responded well to meeting initial targets for fuel reduction on federal lands in Montana, though 54% of accomplishments on USFS lands were through prescribed fire alone;
- Since 2001, fuels around over 2000 homes in the WUI have been treated with federal cost share funds provided as a part of the National Fire Plan.
- Continued congressional funding of the National Fire Plan is critical to implementation of the Western Governors’ 10-year strategy, fuel reduction around homes in the WUI, and on federal lands as well.

<b>Appeals and Litigation of Forest Management Proposals</b>	<b><i>C-</i></b>
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- It is premature to determine whether efficiencies provided in the HFRA and HFI will facilitate more collaboration and fewer administrative or legal challenges to forest management projects.
- Appeals and litigation of “traditional” forest management proposals in Montana continue to consume agency staff and resources better spent on project implementation.

<b>TITLE II</b>	<b>BIOMASS</b>
<b>Utilization of Biomass and Small Diameter Trees</b>	<b><i>C</i></b>

- Industry utilization of mill waste such as bark, wood chips, and sawdust is much improved over the past, but we are far from utilizing even a small fraction of the woody biomass and small diameter material that is contributing to forest health problems and wildfire risk;
- Adequate funding of research and demonstration of biomass technologies and a stable supply of raw material are key variables in developing markets for and utilization of woody biomass in Montana.

<b>TITLE III</b>	<b>WATERSHED MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>Water Quality Protection and Stream Restoration</b>	<b><i>B+</i></b>

- The combination of voluntary forestry Best Management Practices and Streamside Management requirements has proven quite effective at improving and maintaining water quality on forest management projects. BMP audit results indicate that high-risk BMPs should be the focus of improving water quality protection even further.

<b>TITLE IV</b>	<b>INSECT AND DISEASE INFESTATIONS</b>
<b>Insect and Disease Activity in Montana</b>	<b><i>D</i></b>

- Forest insect and disease populations are natural and healthy at endemic levels. However, dense and over mature forest conditions combined with ongoing drought have created insect and disease epidemics that threaten to completely change after forest ecosystems in Montana.
- Forest managers should continue to implement forest health improvement projects to increase tree vigor or change species composition to resist insect and disease outbreaks.
- Congressional funding for research and forest treatment projects should be maintained to allow forest managers to respond rapidly to increased insect and disease activity.